

# Franzese Sentenced to 50 Years, Fined \$20,000 in Robbery Plots

By Bernie Bookbinder

Brooklyn—John (Sonny) Franzese, alleged Long Island Cosa Nostra chieftain, today was sentenced to a 50-year term in federal prison and fined \$20,000 by Federal District Judge Jacob Mishler for conspiring to rob banks in Oceanside, Kew Gardens and Salt Lake City.

Franzese, 48, of 47 Shrub Hollow Rd., Roslyn, was frozen-faced as the judge pronounced sentence. His wife, Tina, was not present. His lawyer, Maurice Edelbaum, announced immediately that he would appeal the conviction to the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Mishler set federal bail at \$150,000—the same amount in which Franzese had been free pending sentencing—on condition that Edelbaum "prosecute his appeal diligently."

The maximum sentence Franzese faced was 65 years in prison and a \$30,000 fine. The sentence he received has no mini-

mum; he is eligible for parole consideration as soon as he enters federal prison.

Edelbaum insisted to the court that Franzese was innocent and said he was certain that his client's conviction would be upset. He challenged the government to permit lie detector tests of the four major witnesses who testified against Franzese and said he would allow Franzese to be tested, too.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Gillen retorted that Edelbaum's offer was being made after Franzese's conviction and sentencing. Mishler brushed aside Edelbaum's challenge, commenting, "There's no need to answer that." Edelbaum also asked the judge to reduce bail, contending that Franzese had been "economically destroyed by this indictment" as a result of trial costs. Gillen urged that Franzese not be granted bail.

Three co-defendants were sentenced after Franzese but the sentencing of a

fourth, John (Johnny Irish) Mitera, 32, of Rosedale, Queens, was delayed awaiting the arrival of his attorney. Joseph M. (Whitey) Florio, 40, and Nicholas Potere, 41, both of Brooklyn, were each sentenced to 15 years, and William D. Crabbe, 41, of South Ozone Park, Queens, was sentenced to five years.

The five men were convicted March 3 by a jury in Albany, where Mishler had moved the trial from Brooklyn after defense attorneys complained that newspaper stories might prejudice the defendant's rights. Franzese, Florio and Potere were found guilty on four counts of an eight-count indictment. The counts were (1) aiding and abetting a robbery at a bank in Kew Gardens, Queens, in which bank employees were endangered with weapons, (2) aiding and abetting the robbery of a bank in Oceanside, (3) receiving the proceeds from the robbery of a

—Continued on Page 78



John (Sonny) Franzese



Newsday Photo by Spencer

Ptl. Frank Groh Enters Car After Suspect's Escape

## Shot, Cuffed, Gone

By Joe Demma and Bob Weiss

Brentwood—A car theft suspect, with his hands cuffed behind him and his back bleeding from a gunshot wound, escaped yesterday from the policeman who had shot him.

Police were still combing the Brentwood area early today for the fugitive. Suffolk Ptl. Frank Groh had left the unidentified youth, lying seemingly uncon-

scious, in a wooded area near the Brentwood Country Club and had returned about 300 yards to his patrol car to get his first aid kit and to radio for an ambulance. Groh had chased the suspect about 300 yards into the wooded area and shot him after the youth had abandoned his car and set out on foot through the woods.

Later, 25 policemen with two dogs

—Continued on Page 78

## Hunt 4 Gunmen In 620-G Theft

By Tom Renner and Bob Greene

New York—A world-wide hunt was being pressed today for four methodical gunmen who raided a casually guarded Hudson River pier early yesterday and, apparently acting on inside information, escaped with \$620,000 in highly negotiable American Express travelers checks.

Joining the search were the FBI, New York City police, Interpol, Scotland Yard and the individual security forces of more than a dozen other nations. The 42,000 checks, all in denominations of \$10 and \$20, can be passed as easily as money in most parts of the world, company officials said. But each has a traceable serial number.

The holdup marked the third theft from international shipments in the New York area in the past week, bringing the total in missing gold, bank notes and checks to \$1,965,035.70. Last week \$420,000 in U.S. currency and Laotian bank notes disappeared from a guarded "strongroom" at Kennedy International

Airport, and a bar of gold valued at \$25,035.70 vanished from a KLM airliner bound from Kennedy to Aruba, Netherlands Antilles.

The pier holdup began yesterday at 3:45 AM, when two men described as in their middle 30s approached Fred Crowley, 43, of Yonkers, on duty at the pier entrance. They asked him if the American Racer was at the dock. Crowley said no, but turned and checked the bulletin board to see when the ship was due. He turned back and was confronted by two guns. The robbers handcuffed him and pushed him inside the entrance to the pier. As he walked in, Crowley saw two other gunmen, who had apparently slipped into the pier, handcuffing and putting tape around the eyes of two other watchmen, George Kelly, 37 and John Walsh, 50, both of New York.

Just then, the fourth watchman, Ernest Altamirano, 46, of 15 Prospect Ave., Great Neck, came walking down the pier. His mouth was also taped, but the gunmen, apparently out of handcuffs, only

—Continued on Page 78

## Ladies, Gentlemen and Others of the Jury...

By Robert Mayer

New York—Socrates Lovinger has been called for jury duty, and it shouldn't happen to a dog. But it did.

Mrs. Walter Lovinger, who owns Socrates, a 9-year-old schnauzer, thinks it shouldn't happen, and she is beginning to wonder about Nassau County. "Are they running short of something, or what?" she asked last night.

Joseph B. Dowler, the Nassau County commissioner of jurors, also thinks it shouldn't happen. "I've been in the court system for almost 30 years and I've never seen anything like this," he said. "We've never sent one to a dog before, to my knowledge."

It shouldn't happen, but there it is in black and white, a qualifying notice for jury duty, made out to Socrates Lovinger and signed by Joseph B. Dowler. "You are hereby summoned," it says, "to personally appear before the commissioner of jurors for the County of Nassau at room 110D, Nassau County Courthouse, Old Country



Newsday Photo by Wolfson

Socrates Lovinger Takes Refuge From the Responsibilities of Citizenship

Road, Mineola, N.Y., on April 17, 1967, between the hours of 5 and 9 PM for examination as to your competency and qualifications to serve as a juror as provided by law."

The pepper-and-salt-colored schnauzer

meets some of the qualifications for jury duty. He is in good physical condition, he has no criminal record, and he has never been a member of a party that advocates the overthrow of the government. But he faces possible disqualification on other

grounds: He is not 21 years old, he is not a resident of Nassau County, he is not a U.S. citizen, and as far as is known he cannot read and write English.

Mrs. Lovinger displayed Socrates and his summons last night at her apartment at 165 E. 72nd St., Manhattan. The summons had been forwarded there from the mailing address on the envelope, which said: "Socrates Lovinger, 300 W. Broadway, Long Beach, N.Y." "That's the address of the old President Hotel in Long Beach," Mrs. Lovinger said. "We stayed there for about eight summers with Socrates until the hotel burned down two years ago."

Dowler said the names for jury notices are taken from tax roles, voter registration roles and the telephone book. He said that the dog's name must have gotten on one of these lists. Mrs. Lovinger said she has no idea how that could have happened. Dowler promised to investigate today. Mrs. Lovinger promised to bring the dog to the courthouse Monday night and "let him answer for himself."



# Say 'Speck Was in Bar'

Peoria, Ill. (AP)—The defense completed its case yesterday after presenting two witnesses who testified that Richard Speck left a Chicago tavern an hour and a half later than the state's star witness said she saw him in the apartment where her eight nursing school colleagues were slain.

The alibi testimony came from Murell Farmer

## Carmela Was Killed By a Drug: Expert

Naples, Fla. (AP)—A toxicologist testified yesterday that he found lethal amounts of a paralyzing drug in the brain of Carmela Coppelino and the defense contended that the testimony came as a complete surprise.

The witness, Dr. Charles Joseph Umberger, chief toxicologist of New York City, said he probed for the drug and could say "with reasonable scientific certainty" that it was the cause of death. Carmela's husband, Dr. Carl Coppelino, is on trial for murder, charged with injecting a fatal dose of succinylcholine into her body, and it has long been known that Umberger made an examination of Mrs. Coppelino's body.

But Coppelino's chief counsel, F. Lee Bailey, told the court after nearly a day-long cross-examination that the defense was "taken completely by surprise by everything this man said." Bailey charged that when the defense tried to question Umberger about his findings, he refused to cooperate.

## Mob Stones Louisville Rights March

Louisville, Ky. (UPI)—Jeering whites hurled rocks, firecrackers and tomatoes into a crowd of open-housing demonstrators last night, injuring three persons.

The throng of white hecklers grew from 100 to 400, some taunting, "nigger, nigger," as the march wound its way through a predominantly white neighborhood. Police made several arrests. The Rev. A. D. Williams King, a leader of the open-housing

and his wife, Gardena, employes of Kay's Pilot House, a bar and restaurant about a mile and a half from the nurses' living quarters on Chicago's South Side. Then, with their stories in the record, the defense abruptly ended its case.

Final arguments were scheduled for tomorrow, when the case is expected to go to the jury of seven men and five women. Circuit Court Judge Herbert C. Paschen granted a recess today to allow both counsels to meet with him and argue on the instructions he will give the jury.

Speck, who was slouching in his chair near the front of the courtroom, sat up and listened during one of the high points of his murder trial.

Farmer, a tall, dark-haired man, told the jury that the 25-year-old Speck came to the tavern twice on the night of last July 13 and left for the second time between 12:15 and 12:30 AM. His wife, a soft-voiced brunette who works there as a waitress and cook, said Speck stayed until 12:30 AM. Miss Corazon Amurao, the only survivor of the massacre, testified last week that Speck knocked on her bedroom door July 13 at 11 PM, killed his victims one by one, and left about 3:30 AM.

Both the Farmers testified that Speck entered the tavern that night at 8, left about 8:30 and returned between 11:30 and midnight. The time element of the first visit clashes with testimony by Patrick Walsh, a prosecution witness. Walsh told jurors he went to the Shipyard Inn, a combination bar, restaurant and rooming house a block from Kay's Pilot House, at 8 that night and saw Speck there. He said Speck stayed until about 10 PM.



UPI Telephoto

**HOMECOMING.** Former Illinois Sen. Paul H. Douglas returns to Capitol Hill yesterday to plead for passage of the truth-in-lending bill. Douglas, now a teacher at the New School for Social Research in Manhattan, addressed his old colleagues on the Senate banking subcommittee.

## Latin Summit OKs Pact

—Continued from Page 2

their declaration, and then leaving Uruguay for a weekend stop at his Texas Ranch.

After limited promises of more trade and more aid, Johnson urged the Latins yesterday to work out their own salvation, with the U.S. as a friendly partner.

U.S. businessmen displayed some irritation at Johnson's summit speech because it did not mention the role to be played by private industry in expanding the Latin American economy. "The private sector has to do 98 per cent of the work," said Paul Wallin, president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in Argentina. "The government will do two per cent." The Latin American Free Trade Association, rated nearly moribund before the summit, moved into position alongside the schedule for the proposed common market. The association announced that tariff barriers will begin going down in 1970, reaching free trade by 1985. Chile, Colombia and Venezuela planned a regional free trade group.

## Hunt 4 in Theft of 620Gs in Travelers Checks

—Continued from Page 3

taped his wrists. Then they went directly to the area where the checks were, pushed a carton of golf balls off one of the two cases and, with two men to each case, carried them to a waiting car outside. The only marking on each case was "American Express—Hamburg."

Within minutes after the theft was reported yesterday, Milton (Mitch) Lipson, American Express security director, strode into his Manhattan office and began to verify the serial numbers on the 40,000 stolen checks. By 8 AM, all of the numbers had been fed into a computer and all of the company's 300 investigators throughout the world had been fed the list by telephone and wire.

In Paris, London, Rome, Tokyo and the more remote spots of the world telephones rang in the local American Express offices and a second system went into effect. All cashed checks, as soon as received by the local offices would be read into phone tapes which would then be

automatically transmitted into the New York computer. Now, any of the missing checks cashed anywhere in the world would be spotted by the Manhattan computer in from eight to 24 hours after it was cashed. And the computer would pinpoint the location.

Police said they have what they feel is an "excellent" description of one of the gunmen. Late last night, the four watchmen overpowered by the robbers were still in Manhattan looking at federal and police picture folders of possible suspects. Authorities were reported to be convinced that the robbers had inside information on the location of the two wooden boxes containing the checks and the times they would be on the pier—the only time that they would not be under heavy guard. All persons who might have any knowledge of the check shipments were being questioned last night and today.

Investigators also were checking undisclosed information which might link yes-

terday's robbery to the \$420,000 stolen from Kennedy Airport Friday. The investigators, noting that a far-flung syndicate would be needed to pass the stolen checks, said they felt that the robbery was planned by the organized underworld and that the gunmen may have already sold the checks to an international fence for from 30 to 50 per cent of face value.

The Bi-state Waterfront Commission, charged with supervision of New York Harbor pier security, has also launched a probe to determine if security was adequate at Pier 62, at the end of West 22nd St., where the robbery took place at 3:45 AM yesterday. None of the four watchmen on the piers was armed and the checks were stored in what may have been an unlocked enclosure in the middle of the pier containing golf balls and advertising materials. Another enclosure nearby containing whiskey was securely padlocked.

Police officials said that the robbery was

"perfectly planned" and that the robbers struck during the few short hours that the checks would not be either in a vault or under armed guard. American Express, which had brought the checks, destined for shipment to Frankfurt, Germany, to the pier in an armored Wells Fargo truck, had specified that the checks be placed in the ship's vault as soon as they were loaded. An American Express Co. spokesman said that the United States Lines, the shipper, had accepted responsibility for the checks when they were dropped at the pier. The spokesman said the stolen checks were fully insured.

## Sonny Draws 50-Yr. Term

—Continued from Page 3

bank in Salt Lake City, Utah, and (4) conspiring to rob banks. All of the robberies occurred in 1965. Matera and Crabbe were found guilty on the last two counts only.

Franzese, Florio, Matera and Crabbe still face a trial May 15 for the 1964 murder of Ernest (Ernie the Hawk) Ruppolo, an underworld informer for the police. Franzese also is free in \$77,000 bail in connection with pending charges in Nassau, Queens and Manhattan.

The Long Islander, who has a series of arrests on minor charges dating from 1938, has long been considered the fastest-rising man in the Cosa Nostra crime empire. He is believed to control rackets in parts of Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens, and on almost all of Long Island. It is reported that he owns several nightclubs. Franzese says he runs a cleaning establishment and has money in theatrical ventures.

## Suspect, Shot and Handcuffed, Escapes

—Continued from Page 3

conceded the area around the country club and then began searching back yards and other possible hiding places in a two square-mile area surrounding the club. The fugitive was still at large early today.

Groh said he first spotted the youth, believed to be between 18 and 20 years of age, at 5:07 PM weaving back and forth between lanes on Suffolk Avenue. Groh said he turned on his siren, and the suspect really took off fast. Groh pursued him at speeds up to 75 MPH from Suffolk Avenue north onto Brentwood Parkway, which dead ends at the wooded area.

At that point, Groh said, "he pulled up

and jumped out of the car. I slid up behind him and he ran into the woods. I yelled for him to stop . . . I yelled, 'Stop or I'll shoot.'" Groh said, he fired a warning shot in the air, but the youth kept right on going.

After running about 300 yards, Groh fired at the youth with his .38-cal. service revolver. "He just stopped and turned around," Groh said. "I went up to him and ordered him to lie down." As Groh put on the handcuffs, he said, he saw the wound in the suspect's back, to the left of his right shoulder blade. "I was not sure I had even hit him," Groh said, " . . . and then he just lay there. I thought he had passed out." Groh went back to his car,

got his first aid kit and radioed for ambulance. When he returned, the suspect had gone, Groh said.

A check of the car the suspect had been driving, a 1965 Pontiac, revealed that it was owned by Joseph Ford of 20 Myron Pl., Hicksville, and had been reported stolen at 3 AM yesterday from Seventh Avenue in Manhattan where it had been parked.

Police said the suspect had reddish blond hair, was about six feet tall, thin, and wore dark trousers and a blue jacket. Police said he was seriously wounded and they did not believe he could get far with his hand cuffed behind him. Police had alerted hospitals and doctors in the area.